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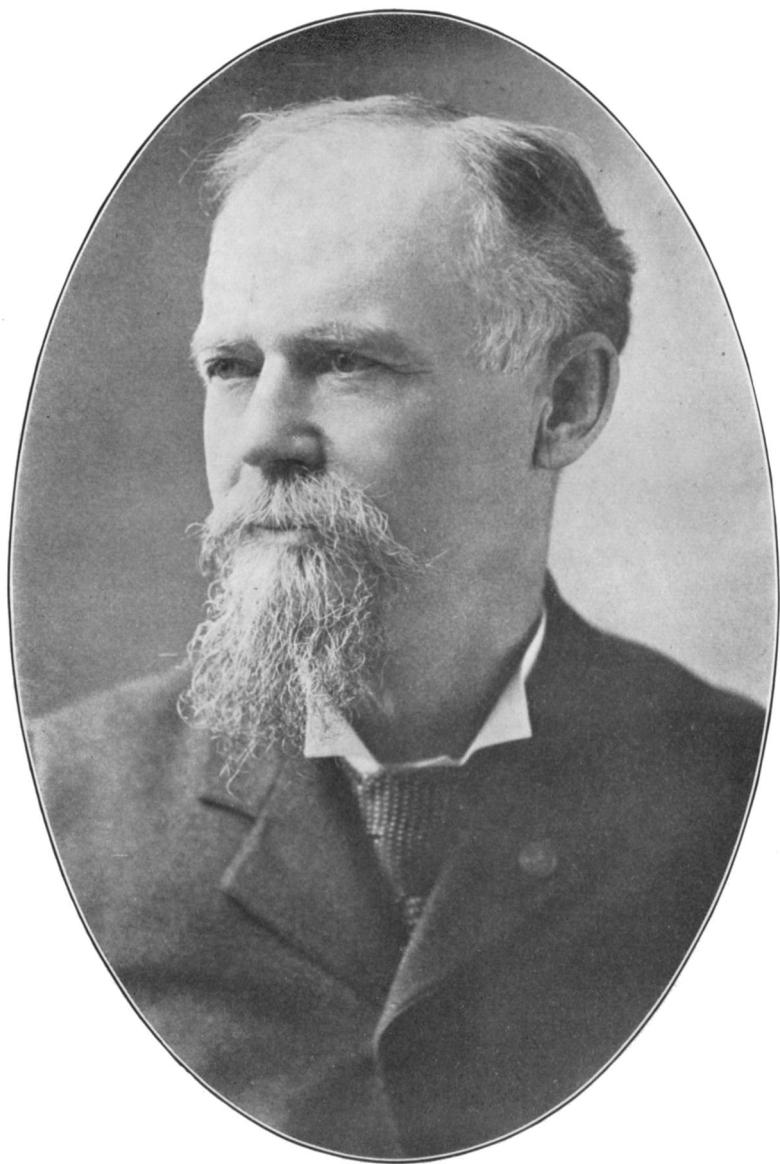
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W. H. THACKER

HON. WILLIAM H. THACKER.

William H. Thacker, a member of the Illinois State Historical Society and valued contributor to this Journal, died at his home in Arlington, Washington, on April 1, 1914.

He was the fourth child of Stephen and Esther (McKinney) Thacker, born in Goshen, Ohio, July 15, 1836. When he was three years of age, his parents moved to the Des Plaines River, west of Chicago, then a frontier wilderness. In subscription schools, and finally at Lake Zurich Academy, he obtained his education, and was then employed as a teacher. In that vocation he migrated to Bath, in Mason County, where, in 1862, he enlisted in the Seventy-first Illinois Infantry Regiment, and re-enlisting, served to the close of the Civil War. There also, on the 21st of September, 1865, he was united in marriage with Miss Melinda Smith. Removing to Virginia, Cass County, he continued teaching country schools, in the meantime studying law in the office of Hon. J. N. Gridley. Admitted to the bar, he there commenced the practice of his profession, and was elected city attorney and justice of the peace. In 1877 he was part owner and editor of the Virginia Gazette.

With the hope of benefiting the failing health of his wife and daughter, he left Virginia in 1890 to locate in western Kansas; but finding climatic conditions there no better than in Illinois, he went on to Idaho. After a year's residence in that bleak region, he continued his westward course to Friday Island, the largest of a group of islands in Puget Sound, combined in San Juan County, in the extreme northwest corner of the State of Washington. There he resumed the practice of law, was elected state's attorney, for three terms represented the county in the State Legislature, and for several years served his people as probate judge. A republican in politics, firm in his principles, but never an "offensive parti-

san" in his successful career there Judge Thacker gained enviable prominence throughout the State as a statesman, jurist, and campaign orator.

He was an inveterate student and a scholar of wide range, making frequent contributions of value to various societies and publications in the lines of literature, history and science. His observations and writings added much to public knowledge of the archaeology, geology and natural history of his ocean-bound location. And his mind was so endowed with fine imagery and ideality as to give him more than ordinary standing among poets. He was a model father and husband, a highly respected and cultured citizen, and in all the walks of life a refined and honorable gentleman.

At length the chilly fogs and capricious weather changes of his island home so impaired the health of himself and family that he was compelled to seek inland more genial atmospheric surroundings. In the Arlington Valley he took up his abode some years ago where, retired from all active business, he passed his remaining days in the quiet enjoyment of his home and literary pursuits, amidst him family, his friends, and his well-assorted library. Mrs. Thacker died there on the 17th of May, 1911, survived by the Judge, two sons and three daughters. For several months he was in declining health, terminating in partial paralysis, from which he was mercifully released by death, conscious and with mental faculties unimpaired, to the last. The last poem he wrote, which well illustrates his faith in life immortal, may very appropriately be here appended. It is entitled "The Bed of Death."

No longer paint the bed of death,
A horrid scene that we should fear;
But rather draw a spirit band
Of friends and loved ones gathering near

To bear the unchained soul away
To broader realms and higher spheres,
To make its onward, upward way
Forever, through the endless years.

What we call death is but a change
From earthly care and pain and strife,
Into a world of fairer fields,
Of purer thought and truer life.

We should not shed the bitter tear,
And mourn as if for one that's lost,
When one we love is freed from pain,
And the "Dark River" safely crossed.

Then paint no more the bed of death,
A scene of terror one should dread;
All who have left this vale of tears,
Are living still—they are not dead!
